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SUBJECT: NKRUMAH'S PARTY LOOKS FORWARD TO 2008 ELECTION

Classified By: CHARGE SUE K. BROWN FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: In a recent conversation with poloffs, the Convention People's Party (CPP) Deputy Secretary said that the CPP has the potential to "create some surprises" in the 2008 Presidential campaign. The CPP is strongest in the Eastern and Central Regions but has a foothold in the Ashanti Region as well. The CPP lamented the ruling New Patriotic Party's (NPP) poor leadership during Ghana,s energy crisis and said the NPP has allowed corruption to run rampant. The CPP has four candidates seeking the party's nomination on November 24, two of whom are prominent individuals with solid reputations and financial backing. A CPP government, if elected, would focus on developing the regions, stamping out corruption, and improving Ghana,s education and agricultural systems. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) On October 23, Daniel Duncan, Deputy Secretary of the Convention People,s Party (CPP), told poloffs that the CPP is rebuilding at the grass roots level and is working toward mobilizing young people to vote. Duncan predicted, as many analysts have, that the 2008 elections will be close and he said the CPP could play an important role in determining the next president of Ghana.(NOTE: The CPP is the party of Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana,s first President, but it has played a marginal role in recent elections. END NOTE.)

¶3. (C) The CPP, Duncan said, is the party of the "common man" and believes that government should share evenly with all citizens, although Duncan was careful to stress that the CPP is not a "communist" party. A CPP government, said Duncan, would ensure that five per cent of the national budget would be allocated for development in Ghana,s ten regions and would emphasize education, long a major plank in the CPP platform. If elected, the CPP would also create public entities to monitor the various Ministries, strengthen the serious fraud office, and increase the capacity of the Police,s Criminal Investigations Division. Finally, the CPP would work to increase and enhance

Ghana,s
agricultural capacity, according to Duncan.

KEY ISSUES FOR 2008: POVERTY, CORRUPTION AND ENERGY

14. (C) Poverty, which Duncan claimed has risen during the NPP,s reign, is one of the key issues for the 2008 election. Energy is another important issue, and Duncan said the energy crisis in 2006-2007 demonstrated the NPP's inability to handle strategic issues. Any serious government, Duncan explained, would have known about the energy shortages in advance and had a plan to manage it. Corruption is also intense, Duncan said, with large "leakages" in government finance. Government leaders have nice houses and send their children to study in Europe, even though they only earn USD 300-400 a month in official salaries, according to Duncan. He gave the ruling party credit on narcotics, saying the NPP is doing the best it can, but corruption and the vulnerable coastline allow smugglers to move with ease. Education standards and schooling have declined as well during the NPP,s tenure and need improvement, according to Duncan.

CPP CONGRESS ON NOVEMBER 24; CANDIDATES LOOK STRONG

15. (C) A key step in contesting the 2008 election for the
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CPP will occur on November 24, when the CPP selects its presidential nominee. The CPP currently has four candidates in the running, but Duncan said two, Dr. Paa Kwesi Nduom, a former Minister for Public Sector Reform and Chairman of the Millennium Challenge Authority, and Dr. Agyeman Badu Akosa, a well known pathologist and former Director General of the Ghana Health Service, are the frontrunners. Citing a requirement for impartiality, Duncan declined to say whom he supported, saying only that both are good candidates. Fundraising is proceeding moderately well, according to Duncan, with the CPP,s main source of revenue being member dues, especially from members based in the U.S. and UK. The "winner take all" attitude, created by the NPP, makes it quite difficult for smaller parties to raise significant amounts of money, said Duncan. Nevertheless, he said "anything can happen" and pointed to strong support in the Western and Central Regions, which could create some "surprises."

GHANA LEADS AFRICA IN DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT

16. (C) Duncan had only positive statements about the Electoral Commission, saying it is doing its best. Ghana, he beamed, continues to lead Africa in holding legitimate elections and he expects the 2008 election to be another solid show of democracy. Duncan said that while in principal the CPP supports permitting overseas Ghanaians

to vote, as envisioned in the Right of People,s Amendment Law (ROPAL), there were serious flaws with the law and inadequate preparations for its implementation. He said it is unlikely the law will be implemented for the coming election.

COMMENT

¶7. (C) Despite its marginal role in the past few elections, the CPP has the potential in 2008 to play a "spoiler" or "kingmaker" role given the highly polarized nature of Ghanaian politics and the relative strength of its potential nominees. The two main candidates are both serious and charismatic figures who enjoy some popular support. While Duncan said nothing about the long rumored reunion with the People,s National Congress (PNC), such a reunion could in fact be the spark that both parties need to become a more potent force in 2008. As reported septel, the differences between the two parties are more symbolic than substantive, and the PNC appears ready to resolve their differences.
BROWN